

**LISTING OF THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

The claims defining the invention are as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for programming a programmable hearing aid with a configurable hearing aid programmer under the control of a computer, the method comprising:

starting the computer;

executing hearing aid fitting software on the computer;

obtaining hearing aid fitting parameters at the computer;

displaying the opportunity to download a firmware program to the hearing aid programmer;

downloading a firmware program to the hearing aid programmer in response to an affirmative response to said displaying, wherein the firmware program configures the hearing aid programmer to communicate with the programmable hearing aid;

downloading hearing aid parameters to the hearing aid programmer; and

programming the programmable hearing aid with the hearing aid programmer.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

verifying that a connection between the hearing aid programmer and the hearing aid exists prior to said programming.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
coupling the computer to the hearing aid programmer prior to said displaying.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
coupling the hearing aid to the hearing aid programmer prior to said downloading  
hearing aid parameters.
5. (Original) The method of claim 3, further comprising:  
coupling the hearing aid to the hearing aid programmer prior to the said  
downloading hearing aid parameters.
6. (Currently Amended) A hearing aid programming system, comprising:  
a computer under the control of hearing aid fitting software;  
a hearing aid programmer coupled to the computer and responsive to a firmware  
program, the firmware program downloadable to the hearing aid  
programmer only in response to a user input at the computer, wherein the  
firmware program configures the hearing aid programmer to communicate  
with a programmable hearing aid;  
[[a]] the programmable hearing aid coupled to the hearing aid programmer, the  
hearing aid programmable with parameters transmitted from the computer  
to the hearing aid programmer and programmed into nonvolatile memory  
of the programmable hearing aid by the hearing aid programmer.

7. (Original) The hearing aid programming system of claim 6, further comprising:  
a parameter memory associated with the hearing aid programmer for receiving  
and storing the parameters.
8. (Original) The hearing aid programming system of claim 7, further comprising:  
a firmware memory associated with the hearing aid programmer for receiving and  
storing the firmware program.
9. (Original) The hearing aid programming system of claim 8, further comprising:  
a computer interface for providing an electrical and data communications  
interface between the computer and the hearing aid programmer.
10. (Original) The hearing aid programming system of claim 9, further comprising:  
a hearing aid interface for providing an electrical and data communications  
interface between the hearing aid programmer and the hearing aid.
11. (Original) The hearing aid programming system of claim 10, wherein:  
the computer interface complies with the Universal Serial Bus 1.0, 1.1 and 2.0  
standard protocol.
12. (Original) The hearing aid programming system of claim 11, wherein:  
the computer interface complies with the Universal Serial Bus 1.0, 1.1 and 2.0  
standard protocol.

13. (Cancelled)
14. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for programming a hearing aid, comprising:
- computer means for executing hearing aid fitting software and capturing patient-specific parameters;
  - hearing aid programmer means responsive to said computer means and to a firmware program for receiving parameters from said computer means and programming the parameters into the hearing aid, wherein the firmware program configures the hearing aid programmer means to communicate with the hearing aid; and
  - user interface means for obtaining a command from a user prior to downloading the firmware program from said computer means to said hearing aid programmer means.
15. (Currently Amended) A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for programming a programmable hearing aid with a configurable hearing aid programmer comprising:
- starting the computer;
  - executing hearing aid fitting software on the computer;
  - obtaining hearing aid fitting parameters at the computer;

displaying the opportunity to download a firmware program to the hearing aid programmer;

downloading the firmware program to the hearing aid programmer in response to an affirmative response to said displaying, wherein the firmware program configures the hearing aid programmer to communicate with the programmable hearing aid;

downloading hearing aid parameters to the hearing aid programmer; and

programming the programmable hearing aid with the hearing aid programmer.